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ABSTRACT

In the last 10 years, women's gender-equity reports have increased in number. Some theorists perceive quantitative procedures as "masculine" and qualitative procedures as "feminine." To refute this dichotomy, over 200 equity research reports produced between 1981 and 1991 were examined in a mini-meta analysis to identify the span, depth, and rigor of the various techniques and methodologies used. Findings reveal a wide variety of techniques blending quantitative and qualitative approaches. Sophisticated empirical studies were in the minority. Evidence of quantification ranged from standard survey techniques to regression and factor-analytic models. Statistical inference using some common and uncommon statistical tools occurred, but not with regularity. Qualitative procedures included: (1) participatory research; (2) oral history; (3) personal life histories; (4) inventories; (5) attitude scales; (6) photostory analysis; (7) content analysis of structured or semistructured data; (8) semantic differential analysis; and (9) other quasi-objective methods. Gender-equity studies have borrowed or modified methods from many disciplines, but methodologically new techniques uniquely suited to women's studies are needed. "Portraiture," as pioneered by S. Lightfoot, is a new method that could be adapted to support gender-equity investigations. A 43-item list of references and an appendix about the number of women earning doctoral degrees are included. (SLD)

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RESERACH METHODOLOGIES USED IN WOMEN'S GENDER-EQUITY STUDIES

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES USED IN WOMEN'S GENDER-EQUITY STUDIES

ABSTRACT

In the last ten years, Women's gender-equity reports have become voluminous, both nationally and internationally. Some theorists perceive quantitative procedures as "masculine" in nature; qualitative procedures, as "feminine". According to Sue V. Rosser: "The subjects, experimental designs, models, and theories of science have become a masculine province that excludes females at all levels." It follows that many gender-equity reports are hortatory, exhibiting qualms and concerns rather than conclusions drawn from well-formulated research problems and carefully-crafted research designs.

In order to refute the dichotomy, 200 + equity research reports produced between 1981-1991 (via the ERIC and PSYCLIT networks) were examined in a mini-meta-analysis thus to identify the span, depth, and rigor of the various research techniques and methodologies utilized in published reports on equity issues.

Findings demonstrated a wide variety of techniques blending quantitative with qualitative approaches. Sophisticated empirical studies were, however, in the minority.

Evidence of quantification ranged from standard survey techniques to regression and factor-analytic models. Statistical inference using some common and uncommon statistical tools occurred, but not with regularity.

Evidence of qualitative procedures was more usual, including participatory research, oral history, personal life histories, inventories, attitude scales, photostory analysis, content analysis of structured or semi-structures data, semantic differential analysis, and other quasi-objective methods--often in conjunction with quantification.

In keeping with trends, gender-equity studies have borrowed and/or modified methods from many disciplines, e.g., sociology, psychology, anthropology, history. Theoretical constructs are in the developmental stage. What is needed, methodologically, is the development of new techniques uniquely suited to Women's studies. Portraiture, as pioneered by Harvard's Sara Lightfoot, is indicative of the "New Wave" in methodology, and could well be adapted to support gender-equity in vestigations.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES USED IN WOMEN'S EQUITY STUDIES

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The Setting

In Shakespeare's As You like It, the melancholy Jaques says:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women, merely players;
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> Act II, Scene 7, lines 140+

More than two decades ago, the entrance of the Women's Movement pricked the public conscience. Much has transpired in the interim. Barbara Ehrenreich, writer, feminist, and contributor to Time magazine (Fall, 1990), forcefully argues that women are losing Gloria Steinem's 1970 vision of equal places for women in a better world. The few upwardly-striving women are engaged in a frantic quest for personal achievement and recognition. Unfortunately, about half of the women in our Country are peripheral, not really included, not assimilated, have not gained equal footing in politics, in corporate management, in higher education, or in other professions. Not much has changed. The Movement is exiting; women are waiting for it to be jump-started!

Speaking at the Educational Testing Service Invitational Conference (October, 1991), Ellen Futter, president of Barnard College, cited the following statistics: "fewer than 8 percent of federal and state judges are female; fewer than 6 per cent of all partners in law firms are female; fewer than 1 per cent of corporate managers are women; there are only 2 female U.S. senators". A recent survey reported in USA-TODAY (December 3, 1991) showed that in academe, women who are full professors in college and universities, constituted only 12 per cent of that population. The surgeon general's office has pointed out that women are virtually invisible in medical research fields.

Even though the ultimate goals of the Movement have not been met, a great volume of gender equity reports have been produced in the last ten years. Some qualify as sound research; many are, however, hortatory; others are exercises in polemics. Still others focus upon qualms and concerns rather than upon the findings, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from well-formulated research problems and carefully-crafted research designs.

Some of the conditions, factors, and assumptions which seem to have shaped equity studies, and, in many cases, directed methodological choices are these:

1) The feminist position that personal life histories and personal experiences are the most valid sources of data....
2) The power of self-belief must be woven into the design; self-esteem must be ignited in research efforts; interaction of the investigator and subject or subjects is desirable. Subjectivity is prized.
3) Women have traditionally been "marginal" in society; their deep concerns and "real" problems have been overlooked.
4) Some theorists perceive Qualitative procedures as "feminine"; Quantitative procedures, as "masculine".

Sue V. Rosser summarizes: "The subjects, experimental designs, models and theories of science have become a masculine province that excludes females at all levels".

Purpose and Procedure

At the outset, this pilot study was intended to be a locator of commonalities among research methodologies across a sample of gender-equity studies (1981-1991)--a sort of modified "meta-analysis". The full power of this technique could not be entirely employed due, in part, to the largely qualitative nature of the studies, and to sample size.

Two computerized informational data bases (ERIC and PSYLIT) were accessed. These documentary universes were delimited by relevant descriptors and cross-referenced. Illustrative of the descriptors were these:

Research methodology
Research design
Research tools
Research problems
Experimental subjects
Women's studies
Feminism
Sex fairness
Sex role attitudes
Stereotyped attitudes

Some of the searches were fruitful; others were not. For example,

In the ERIC Network:
Research methodology and feminism.....28 entries
Research and women's studies..... 0 entries

In PSYLIT:
Feminism and methodology.....16 entries
Feminism and experimental subjects..... 1 entry

In repeated trials, forty (40) searches across the two data bases yielded approximately 200+ usable reports. Many other bibliographic sources were also consulted. The aggregate of these studies constituted the working "sample".

Each of the 200+ reports, and those otherwise located, were scanned

for evidence of the use of specific research methodologies or techniques. References to data-gathering instruments were also noted.

In order to synthesize findings, three Categories of method were established: (1) Research Methodologies---those which indicated the major thrust or "style" of the study; (2) Research Techniques---those "self-contained" methods packages; (3) Instrumentation---published, well-known, or named devices used for data collection.

Below is an alphabetical listing by Category:

Research Methodologies

Anecdotal record analysis
Attitude research
Case studies
Communication research
Comparative methodology
Content analysis
Contextual analysis
Cross-cultural methodology
Cross-national methodology
Demography
Descriptive-status research
Documentary analysis of archival data
Econometric research
Empowering research
    Dialogue and Reflection
Epistemological inquiry
Evaluation research
Factor analysis
Follow-up studies
Forced choice
Historical research
    Life history analysis
    Photographic history analysis
Interviews (open, semi-structured, structured)
Interviews by telephone
Interdisciplinary combinations of methods
Job analysis methods
Job evaluation methods
Longitudinal research
Meta-analysis
Micro-economic methods
New testament parable parallels
Observational Methods
Participatory research
Phenomenological research
Philosophical inquiry
Photographic analysis

Portfolio method
Prediction
Profile analysis
Reflection
Replication
Self-probe methodology
Self-evaluation
Semantic differential analysis
Simulation
Sociometry
Structuralist method (derived from linguistics and anthropology)
Surveys (questionnaires: mailed or administered on site)
Systems analysis
Time series studies

Research Techniques

Item analysis
Mapping
Norming
Pre-test/post-test evaluation
Psychological dimensioning of femininity/masculinity
Ratio measures
Sampling techniques
Statistical techniques (descriptive)
Statistical techniques (inferential)
    ANOVA
    Correlational analysis
    Hierarchical multivariate analysis
    Multivariate analysis
Video taping/coding behaviors
Weighting

Instrumentation

Andro Scale of Personality
Bem Sex Role Inventory
Check lists (re: sex bias)
Depression Adjective Scale
Kohberg's Moral Judgement Scale
Loneliness Scale (D. Russell-UCLA)
Multiple Affect Adjective Check list
Social Category Verification Tasks
Cultural sex stereotypes (variety of measurement forms)

Analysis

Given the assumption that personal life histories are most germane to the exploration of women's issues, it is not surprising that the larger share of studies examined were qualitative. This is not to say that quantitative studies were not found, but that these appeared less frequently.

As a new discipline develops, as in Women's studies, an integrative, interdisciplinary, multidimensional theory which channels into a clear theoretical stream is needed. This trend was noted here. In the group of studies reviewed, much attention has been given to philosophical and epistemological explications---feminist theory building (by Authors Lather, Childers and Grunig, Sprague and Zimmerman, Neitz, and others). As a matter of fact, the various research strands could well be classified into these types of inquiry: Philosophical, Epistemological, Psychological, Policy Analysis, and, of course, Personal Life Experience Observations.

A close examination of the 200+ reports revealed quite a diversity of strategies. In the first Category, 52 different methodologies were located, and in the second Category, 16 different techniques were found. In the third Category, there were only 9 references to instrumentation. The frequencies of occurrences in each Category were too small to warrant further statistical analysis.

A content analysis of the reports indicated that survey methods utilizing questionnaires (administered on site or mailed), and interviews were most often chosen. There was much methodological borrowing from a wide range of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, history, anthropology, and linguistics. Indigenous to many

studies were cautions regarding biases---from previous research, from investigator interaction, from sensitivity to "political correctness", and from preconceptions about women in the fabric of society.

Using the system for classifying the complexity of statistical techniques developed by Goodwin and Goodwin (1985) and applied to Tonigan and Schau (1991), it was found that statistical procedures were under-played. There were some references to basic univariate techniques (e.g., descriptive correlational analysis); occasional references to intermediate techniques (e.g., ANOVA); and, to advanced techniques (e.g., factor analysis). In this sample, only one reference to nonparametric procedures was found.

References to instrumentation were relatively scarce. Only two (2) of the nine (9) devices employed were widely recognized, viz., the Bem Sex Role Inventory and Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Scale. In studies specifying instruments, the issues of validity and reliability were skirted or vaguely addressed.

Empirical studies were rare. In general, little attention seemed to be given to the classification of variables, or to quantification processes.

The limitations of this sample have already been noted, and, no doubt, affected outcomes. On the other hand, in a recent report sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation, in cooperation with the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, approximately 1000 women's equity studies were reviewed; only about 100 were research-oriented.

It can be tentatively concluded that a strong, methodological drive is not quite characteristic of gender-equity studies. Yet, rigorous

methods of inquiry coupled with appropriate techniques of quantification have long been considered central to research in substantive areas.

Relevant Research: A Sampler

To demonstrate the tenor of this sample, a few gender-related (8) studies have been capsuled here by substance and method.

U.S. Department of Education Study (1991)

In a recent research update, the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, it is projected that more women than men will earn doctoral degrees by the Year 2001. There has been a steady increase in the number of degrees awarded to women, an increase of more than 70 per cent between (1975-76) and (1990-1991). In the same time frame, men dropped about 10 per cent. The quantitative profile is included as an appendix.

(Methodology: Graphing)

Tonigan, J. Scott, and, Schau, Candace G. Survey of Statistical Characteristics in Education Dissertations (1991)

This study, previously mentioned, provides interesting, but cautious conclusions regarding women in higher education. The study examined the statistical characteristics of a sample of 333 doctoral dissertations completed between 1973 and 1984 in a southwestern college of education. Almost half (44 per cent) of these dissertations were written by women. The complexity of statistical techniques employed varied between female and male dissertation authors. Serendipitously, it was found that female Ph.D. candidates used intermediate and advanced statistical procedures more often than their male counterparts, and basic techniques less often. Contingent findings demonstrated that large proportions of women were enrolled in the college's two advanced

statistics courses, contradicting the bulk of research literature that concludes that females shy away from classes requiring knowledge and skills involving quantification at secondary school levels and in the undergraduate college years.

(Methodology: Survey and classification of data via Goodwin and Goodwin's System; nonparametric analysis, Chi Square)

Harvard University Project (1990 in Progress)

A longitudinal study of female psychology is underway under the aegis of Harvard University's Project on the Psychology of Women and the Development of Girls. In this Project, the research team has abandoned standard research techniques in favor of extended dialogues with subjects, covering such topics as personal friendships, experiences in classrooms, concepts of justice, rules, racial attitudes, and opinions on sex. Tentative findings include the following: women treasure human relationships, see people as mutually dependent, tend to interpret happenings in context, compromise, and greatly fear isolation. Male perceptions are the antitheses of these characteristics. Girls/women are "pragmatic"; men/boys are "elaborative". Psychologist Carol Gilligan, a central figure on the team, sees women as coming 'from a different place' and speaking "in a different voice" (the title of her 1982 book).

This on-going research has come under a certain amount of criticism, mainly because it seems to re-enforce stereotypes and thus diminishes the quest for equality.

(Methodology: Longitudinal approach; content analysis of extended, semi-structured conversations; coding verbal (spoken) data)

Hyde, Janet S. Meta-Analysis: What Has It Done for Feminist Psychology? (1986)

Author Hyde notes that most meta-analyses to date have been directed toward highlighting gender differences. Beyond this, she states that in gender-equity studies, meta-analysis can make contributions in four areas: (1) demonstrate that gender differences are actually quite small; (2) can test the effect of sex of researchers on outcomes; (3) can address validities in gender difference research; (4) can be used to test competing theories, conceptualizations, and generalizations.

She recognizes that original data and statistics from individual empirical studies must be available for synthesis. Hyde sees this procedure as promising in correcting overestimation and overemphasis on gender differences. Full-fledged meta-analysis might raise questions about the outcomes of the Harvard Project (1990--) as well as those in recent reports issued by the American Association of University Women (1990 and 1992).

(Methodology: Meta-Analysis)

How Schools Shortchange Women: Report of the AAUW Educational Foundation (1992)

Among other findings, the current report, sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation, points out that there is a gap between girls and boys in standardized test scores, specifically on the SAT test (boys outscore girls by 8 points in verbal competency and 44 points in mathematics); and, on Advanced

Placement Tests (boys outperform girls in physics, mathematics, and biology). These values lead to underprediction for girls and overprediction for boys. Girls enrolled in high school science and mathematics classes do just as well as boys, but more boys take advanced courses in these areas. Hence the aggregate of scores is misleading in prediction analysis. Blame for these conditions is placed on several factors including testing and test score interpretation--as in prediction studies; on lower self-esteem in adolescent girls (AAUW report, 1990); on sexist curricula; on lack of textbooks written by women; and, on sexist language in the classroom. No cause and effect relationships have yet been shown. In an evaluation of the report, an official in the U.S. Department of Education describes it as a special case of "pleading and whining."

(Methodology: aggregate data analysis, prediction)

Speth, Carol A. and others, Causal Attributions for Success in Hiring Decisions (1986)

This was one of the few empirical studies in the sample. Like others of an experimental nature, this investigation did not support previous findings. Under attribution theory, four major explanations for behavioral outcomes are recognized: ability, effort, luck, and task-ease. The theory suggests that explanations given for an applicant's success potential may influence applicant evaluations. Of special importance is that related research has indicated that female and male applicants may be differently affected by gender-stereotyped descriptions, job level, and ambiguous "fit" between qualifications and job demands. In this study, 86 personnel and management persons rated

hypothetical applicants for the positions of "director" and "counselor". All were qualified for counselor, but none had managerial experience. A three-way significant interaction of sex, gender of attributes and job level/ambiguity was found for the dependent variable " luck", but not for the other three. Raters valued nonstereotypical attributes more highly for the "director" when the "fit" between qualifications and job demands was ambiguous--more so than for the "counselor". Previous research had shown that external qualities were female hallmarks. In the present study, sex interacts with ambiguity of fit and gender-related attributes.

(Methodology: ANOVA)

Borys, Shelley and Perlman, Daniel, Gender Differences in Loneliness (1985)

Gender difference studies often produce contradictory results, as with the Speth study. Here, the researchers compared data from the administration of the UCLA Loneliness Scales with data from the administration of a self-labeling measure of loneliness. Results showed a clear pattern of sex differences not usually found with the UCLA instrument alone---when found, males had higher loneliness scores. In self-labeling procedures, women more frequently than men admitted to being lonely. An experiment followed with 69 female subjects and 48 male undergraduates. Each of the subjects was presented with a case history of a lonely person that varied only with the target subject's sex. Subjects indicated more rejection of a lonely male than of a lonely female. These resultant findings support the position that women are more likely to admit their loneliness than men because the negative

consequences of admitting loneliness are less for women.

(Methodology: experimental design, case history)

Sutherland, Margaret B. Women Who Teach in Universities (1985)

For an international perspective on research methodology, one might turn to the work of Margaret B. Sutherland, Professor Em., University of Leeds, Great Britain. Professor Sutherland is a specialist in the methodology of Comparative Education. Based upon her book, Women Who Teach in Universities, Sutherland's article on methodology and techniques is of importance. She recognizes that documentary analysis, comparative statistics, historical and case studies, as well as descriptive personal reporting are the tools of the comparative method. Having studied women professors in France, Finland, the two Germanys, and Britain (N=244), and women in Portugal (N=56) as a follow-up, she is in a position to evaluate Questionnaire and Interview procedures within an international context.

Sutherland states that quantification of existing data is quite possible, but that analysis of new data by empirical means is very difficult when more than one educational system is involved. She recommends the Questionnaire as a preliminary device, but sees problems of non-response, incomplete responses, and confidence in the reliability of returns. To minimize these obstacles, she recommends Interview procedures. But cautions of pitfalls such as:

Language barriers

Travel costs

Problems of access to educational institutions

Interviewing appears to be advantageous, provided that the

investigator is thoroughly grounded in knowledge of the country's history, political structure, and reforms, accomplished or in progress. Interviews will be successful if respondents cooperate in setting up time schedules. Excuses are often offered, such as professional travel commitments, time constraints, and other avoidance mechanisms.

Sutherland's menu for successful cross-cultural interviews is as follows:

1) Let respondents add relevant points not covered in the major questions. Prepared questions may unearth points more complex than expected. Leeway must be provided for full exploration.
2) While the major questions should remain the same, problems of quantification arise when the investigation moves from country to country. Respondents may offer new or even extraneous ideas. These may eventually be reported as partial data.
3) Interviews may reveal differences between institutional intent (as in policy statements) and actual practice. These must be interpreted according to national modes or "mind-sets".
4) Details offered may be too inconsequential to shed light on the respective country's official posture.
5) Interviewees, on occasion, will be given a choice of language for the session. It is not a good solution to have the subject bring an interpreter, (a colleague or student.). The dialogue between subject and translator may not be fully translated. This brings up the problem of bias in favor of interviewees who are competent in, say, English.
6) Bias may also be present in framing the major questions; may be based upon the assumption that conditions are the same or

parallel to conditions at the researcher's home base.

7) Conflicting views must be captured and summarized. Reliability can be established by comparisons of results with those in related research by other researchers.

8) The whole undertaking is extremely time-consuming.

9) The role of the observer may mar or change the subjects' perceptions. This is undesirable. On the other hand, awareness is a positive outcome.

In dealing with women who teach in universities, one may find varying proportions of feminists--those active in women's organizations and those who do not subscribe to the goals of the Movement at all.

(Methodology: Interviews, questionnaires, descriptive statistics)

Recommendations and Projections

Future research by, for, and about women should be grounded in new theory supported by new, innovative, and perhaps, unconventional methodological approaches.

Models, both scientifically accurate and inclusive of both sexes should be developed (Rosser). Integration of female and male viewpoints is essential for better research and for better science (Scheuneman). Since women have been marginal, there is a need for less traditional sources of bona fide data, such as personal letters, pamphlets, diaries, newsletters, oral histories, memoranda, reports of schools and school practice, and the possibility of re-construction from pieces of fiction of the period or times. (Shakesschaft).

The new scholarship might well focus on investigations which take note of the "total context" (female perspective) combined with the application of "rules" (male perspective). There should be a blending of the objective (quantitative) and subjective (qualitative) points of view. Dichotomy, the "D-word" should be abandoned.

The re-examination of little-used techniques and methodologies should be undertaken along with explorations of newer ones.

The creative development of new methodologies must be left to the gender-equity researchers of the future. However, there are a number of existing procedures which could be reviewed, adapted, or updated, if necessary, for utility in methodology. To mention a few:

1) Action research (or field study--derived from the work of Columbia's Stephen Corey, and now back in vogue)
2) Cohort analysis (studies of intra-cohort development; of comparative cohort careers; inter-cohort differentiation in

various parameters used to characterize aggregate cohort histories)

3) Composite interview construction

4) Evaluation research (the possibilities are extensive, including, Adversary-oriented approaches; Cost studies; Cost benefit analysis; Cost feasibility studies; Cost utility analysis; Naturalistic evaluation)

5) Delphi studies

6) Disciplined subjective inquiry

7) Generic analysis

8) Focused group interviews

9) Heuristic approaches

10) Legal or policy studies

11) Portraiture (as developed by Harvard's Sara Lightfoot)

For data analysis and interpretation, nonparametric statistical procedures offer many possibilities.

Conclusion or 'The Girls are Still in the Balcony'

In the 1990's, women's stories command front-page press and lead-story status on the evening television news. Women are honored at public functions, are mayors (Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio), are police chiefs, direct and produce big-budget movies, and one was nominated to run as a vice-presidential candidate in a national election. These are the lucky few. Linda Ellerbee writes: "Yes, do look how far we have come----We settled for popularity, not power, and went our separate ways." (The Detroit Free Press, February 21, 1992).

In her witty new book, The Girls in the Balcony (Women, Men and the New York Times), Nan Robertson, Pulitzer Prize reporter formerly with the New York Times, describes how female journalists, assigned to cover major events, were relegated to the balcony of the National Press Club in Washington. Until 1955, the "girls" were not permitted to enter the Club even on business, and until 1971 could not join the Club!

The Times has always had an impressive roster of outstanding women staffers like Ann O'Hare McCormick, who had interviewed Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin when others had failed. Finally a self-styled "Committee" at the newspaper banded together and filed a class action suit against the Times charging sex discrimination (1972). Just before the trial date, the Times settled out of court. How has the scene changed? In 1992, Women now constitute 23 per cent of the staff of professional reporters. Not impressive! Nor overwhelming!

Educational research can provide "know-how" which will enhance future gender-equity research. Comprehensive theory must be generated along with developmental work in methodology, thus to pave the way toward action and "real" equality.

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APPENDIX

Occupational Outlook Quarterly

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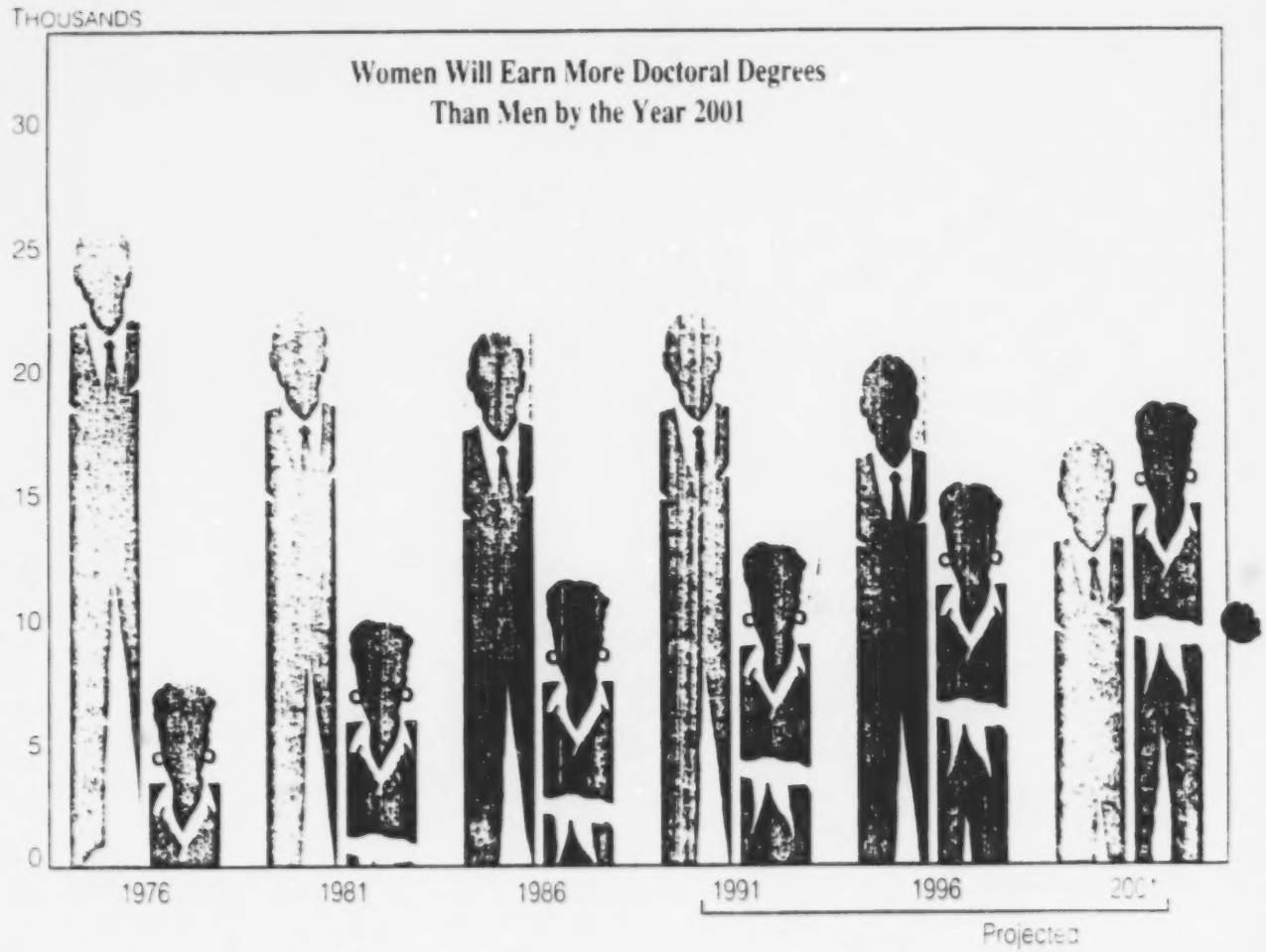
OOChart



By the year 2001, the number of doctorate degrees awarded to women is projected to surpass the number awarded to men.

The number of doctorate degrees awarded to women increased by more than 70 percent between 1975-76 and 1990-91, while the number conferred on men dropped about 10 percent during the same period. These trends are projected to continue through 2001.

The growth in the number of doctorate degrees awarded to women reflects the rising enrollment of women in graduate schools. Between 1976 and 1988, their numbers increased from 619,000 to 774,000, an increase of 25 percent. In contrast, the graduate enrollment of men decreased 2 percent, from 714,000 to 698,000. Over the projection period, these patterns are expected to continue.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Projections of Education Statistics to 2001, an Update."

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